

From: Robert A. Lentz
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/28/02 12:37am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to exercise my right under the Tunney Act to comment on the proposed settlement of the United States vs. Microsoft antitrust case.

I have been using computers since the age of fifteen, when my parents got one at home. Since then I have been a continuous user of computers as a consumer, and based upon this experience I am opposed to the proposed settlement.

Over the past eighteen years I have seen many innovative and useful software programs be released by many different companies, and have been a satisfied customer of several of these companies.

Unfortunately, the lifespan of these companies has not been great. What I have seen repeatedly is that once their product becomes popular, Microsoft will copy its functionality into its products, Office and/or Windows, and the company will steadily lose customers.

So, what I have repeatedly seen is that my choice as a consumer has been diminished by the predatory practices of which Microsoft has been found guilty.

To me, the proposed settlement has far too many conditions exempting Microsoft's behavior under certain conditions. This does nothing to improve my choice as a consumer in those areas. Nor do I see how this remedy allows for a climate in which new companies have air to breathe.

As has been reported in the mainstream press, all venture capitalists ask potential software startups about how Microsoft competes (currently) in their area and what their plan is if Microsoft gets interested in the startup's area.

We have seen, in the instance of the web browser wars, how Microsoft will ruthlessly use any tactic to gain control of popular markets. While we are a free capitalist society, we do believe in fair competition, including anti-dumping statutes. Microsoft's size and resources, plus their desktop and 'office productivity' monopoly allow them to unfairly tie and bundle, often 'dumping' the product on the market at a great loss. As a consumer I feel this must be corrected.

Lastly, I must wonder about Microsoft's need to tie all this software into Windows. I thought Windows was merely the operating system. My understanding of a computer operating system is that it is supposed to provide the fundamental management of and interaction with the hardware

that applications require. Thus, it seems to me that when Microsoft ties a software application to Windows, it is perverting what an operating system is supposed to be. I don't see merely bundling applications as 'innovation', but rather as a marketing tactic in which Microsoft is abusing its monopolistic position.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Sincerely,
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